

REMARKS

Claims 12-30 and 34-44 are pending in this application. Claims 12-30 and 34-44 are rejected. Claim 12 is amended hereby.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 12-26, 34-41, and 43-44 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,847,116 (Dutt '116), Applicants have amended claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 12, and claims 13-30 and 34-44 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

Dutt '116 discloses a method of producing a composite wet-press papermakers felt by which one side of a textile base fabric can be given a uniform, smooth coating of polymeric resin particles fused together to provide a porous, elastic surface. A homogeneous foam, composed of resin particles, a binder material, and a solvent is applied to the textile base fabric in a uniformly thick coating. The textile base fabric is then subjected to heat, which evaporates the solvent and fuses the resin particles to each other and to the fabric base. (Abstract).

In contrast, claim 12, as amended, recites in part “applying a dispersion of particulate polymeric material to a batt of fibres, thermally activating the dispersion of particulate polymeric material and thereby softening the particulate polymeric material such that the particulate polymeric material undergoes at least partial flow and fuses to itself and to the batt of fibres; wherein the activated dispersion of particulate polymeric material results in a layer which forms the surface of the industrial fabric and extends vertically into the batt of fibres.” (Emphasis added). Applicant submits that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed or suggested by Dutt '116, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

The amendment to claim 12 is supported in the Specification on page 3, lines 17-21.

Dutt '116 repeatedly provides that the resinous particle structure forms the surface of the fabric. (Column 2, lines 50-68; column 4, lines 5-19). Moreover, Dutt '116 teaches away from extending the resinous particle structure vertically within the base fabric. For instance, Dutt '116 states as follows: "One of the critical parameters with regard to the homogeneous foam is its viscosity, which must be of a degree that bleed through the fabric structure can be avoided. In this way, all of the polymeric particulate material will be retained on the surface of the fabric." Thus, Applicants submit that Dutt '116 fails to disclose the activated dispersion of particulate polymeric material resulting in a layer which forms the surface of the industrial fabric and extends vertically into the batt of fibres.

Further, to the extent that the Examiner is considering U.S. Patent No. 4,571,359 (Dutt '359), Figs. 1 and 2 of Dutt '359 show particles 20 on what appears to be a top surface of fabric 10. Further, Applicants argue that the argument on page 4 of the Office Action that column 4, lines 15-24 of Dutt '359 discloses the fiber batt of claim 12 of the present invention is, respectfully, incorrect. This reference in Dutt '359 is to an alternative embodiment where a fiber batt is used in place of particles 20; that is, fibers are placed on a woven fabric substrate, rather than particles. Thus, the example cited by the Examiner fails to disclose particles fused to a fiber batt. Further, responsive to the argument on page 4 of the Office Action that Dutt '116 does not teach that the fibers fuse together, Applicants argue that Dutt '116 does not clearly disclose the use of a fiber batt at all; Dutt '116 simply provides that foam 3 is provided on base fabric 1 and also indicates that a textile base fabric of Dutt '359 may be used. While Dutt '359 focuses on a

woven base layer, Dutt '359, however, states that the base layer may be any conventional press felt fabric and earlier refers to the batt-on-base construction. (Column 1, lines 62-68; column 3, lines 8-9). Even so, Dutt '359 does not disclose the details of the present invention, wherein particles are bonded to the fiber batt to form a layer on and within the fiber batt.

An advantage of the present invention is that a composite structure is formed with the batt of fibers.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that claim 12, and claims 13-30 and 34-44 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

Claims 27-30 and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dutt '116 and in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,298,124 (Eklund et al.). However, claims 27-30 and 42 depend from claim 12, which is in condition for allowance for the reasons given above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 27-30 and 42 are also now in condition for allowance, which is hereby respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

In the event Applicants have overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicants hereby conditionally petition therefor and authorize that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095, TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (260) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,

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